



# CommuniQUÉ

A P R I L 2 0 0 1

## NEW ATTORNEY GENERAL RECEIVES A HEARTY WELCOME DURING HIS FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO INS HEADQUARTERS

Cover Photo: Attorney General Ashcroft faces television network cameras to make a brief statement.  
(Photograph is courtesy of the Department of Justice)



Cowboy Poet Bud Strom and his canyon neighbors in Arizona thanked local Border Patrol Agents with a barbecue. Strom topped off the meal with a poem he wrote for the occasion about Border Patrol history.



In Chicago, the District Director speaks Spanish in televised public service announcements. The TV spots are part of a wider effort to reach out to the city's many immigrant groups in their native languages.

# HEADQUARTERS *News*

## WOMEN SCORE GAINS IN THE WORKPLACE BUT STILL FACE MANY CHALLENGES

Despite the many gains secured by the women's movement, this is not the time to rest on the accomplishments of the past, the guest speaker told the Women's History Month celebration at INS headquarters on March 21.

"The most incredible accomplishment of the women's movement in the last 30 years is that we have raised consciousness," said Leslie R. Wolfe, president of the Center for Women Policy Studies in Washington, D.C., a non-profit policy research and advocacy organization.

"The world has now seen women as astronauts and Supreme Court justices," Wolfe said. Sally Ride riding a rocket into space was considered headline news 20 years ago. "Now, it's normal."

Without the awareness of what women can achieve, "you would not have seen a woman as INS commissioner," she said, referring to former INS Commissioner Doris Meissner.

However, expanding opportunities and changing the lives of individual women is not the only answer to today's issues, according to Wolfe. Bringing about basic change in workplace cultures, in the laws and public policy of this country and other nations around the world is needed to open the doors of opportunity to more women.

Women's issues regularly find a hearing at the United Nations and at international conferences concerned with women's rights or reducing the incidence of violence against women, she noted. "Yet signing a document isn't enough to ensure that it is implemented."



Taking part in the observance were Gerri Ratliff, Acting Director for Congressional Relations; JoAn Taylor of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO); Barbara L. Strack, Acting Executive Associate Commissioner for Policy and Planning; featured speaker Leslie R. Wolfe; and D. Diane Weaver, Director of the EEO Office.



Appearing for the event were Maria Jackson of the EEO Office; Lourdes Garcia of the Headquarters Office of Inspections; Renee DeShazor of Immigration Benefits and JoAn Taylor.

In this country, more attention should be paid to the needs of working women and the role of parents, Wolfe said. A more direct approach is needed to slow the transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS. "We still don't have a women-centered HIV prevention program."

Women who achieve individual success need to help others, she said. "They need to know that as they climb, they must lift."

Women of America should similarly be aware of the challenges faced elsewhere, Wolfe told the audience. "We are the lucky ones. Most of our sisters around the world don't have the luxury" to pause and take stock of the role of women in their own societies. "We are here for all of these women."

The event opened with recognition of a special group of more than a dozen Washington-based INS employees. They had been nominated for the Woman of Courage and Vision award from the Department of Justice and were asked to stand as their names were read. More than 50 nominations were received from throughout the INS for the award

that honored women "who have successfully struggled to balance their professional and personal lives, often at significant sacrifices, thereby providing a positive role model for other employees."

The award's recipient, Barbara LeMaster, a Program Analyst at INS headquarters, was attending a similar and coincident event at the Department of Justice.

*Women who achieve individual success, "need to know that as they climb, they must lift."*

LESLIE R. WOLFE

## To the INS Staff from the Acting Commissioner



I am pleased to be serving as the Acting Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. I consider it a privilege to work with the Service's many talented and committed employees.

I was honored when the Attorney General asked me to serve as your Acting Commissioner. I have a great respect for the work of INS and the dedication of its employees.

I plan to focus on five basic themes that are a very large part of my philosophy of how we all work together in doing our job: leadership, communication, customer service, professionalism, and teamwork. Good leadership is the prerequisite to all of the other qualities. I will let you do your jobs, to continue accomplishing the Service's mission and I will work closely with you in setting goals and priorities.

Communication is more than keeping in touch with your colleagues. I expect you to keep me and the INS management team fully informed. When a colleague calls you on the telephone or sends you an e-mail, there is a reason for that. They need you and you need them. Customer service is more than serving our external customers: it's also serving each other. Responding to your colleagues' needs is very important. Professionalism is a focus on excellence, fostering a sense of cohesiveness, again, all working together.

Teamwork is a focus on commitment to the good of the entire organization, not just your own program. Your success depends so much on the entire agency and its success. This needs to be a collaborative, cooperative effort.

This is a proud agency of outstanding professionals and I look forward to this unique opportunity to lead INS in the coming months.

Kevin D. Rooney

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# HEADQUARTERS *News*

## *New Attorney General receives a hearty welcome during his first official visit to INS headquarters*

An introduction was probably unnecessary. Very few of the hundreds of INS staff lining the hallways of the headquarters building on the afternoon of April 17 were unfamiliar with their visitor's name nor unaware of his schedule.

"Hello, my name is John Ashcroft," said the recently installed Attorney General, as he approached each successive group of INS employees, greeting them with a broad smile and offering a handshake.

It was the mere mention of Ashcroft's name that had sent employees quickly filing out of their offices and into the hallway as word spread that the Attorney General had arrived on their floor. For some, it was a first opportunity to greet and get a glimpse of an Attorney General, the official who runs the Department of Justice, the INS' parent organization.

For Ashcroft, who took office just a month before, the visit was a first official tour of INS headquarters

and an opportunity to sit down with its 20-member executive staff.

During a 75-minute briefing just prior to the walking tour, senior INS officials described the agency's varied missions, organizational structure and the major issues and needs that face the agency. "I wanted him to see our focus on enforcement, on the one hand, and on immigration benefits, on the other," said Kevin D. Rooney, Acting INS Commissioner.

The Attorney General made it clear at the outset of the session that he was there to listen more than talk. Ashcroft remarked on the complexity of the INS' various roles and asked the executive staff how it goes about motivating the agency's workforce of 33,000 people.

However, the focus of most of his questions dealt with how he, as Attorney General, could help the agency and support its mission, Rooney said. Besides helping to ensure sufficient funding for the agency, he



Evie Adams and Sabrina Price smile after presenting the Attorney General with an emergency whistle from the Office of Security. Chief of Staff Michael Becraft and the Attorney General continue down the line.



Border Patrol Agent Richard Hunt shakes hands with the Attorney General. In the background are Ken Sava, Dave Peter and Mike Pearson of Field Operations.



Chief of Staff Michael Becraft, Attorney General Ashcroft and Acting Commissioner Kevin Rooney, at left, set off on the hallway tour.



Leola Redfearn of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity greets the Attorney General, while colleagues, from left, Eugene Evans, Darryl Himes, Deborah Crawford, Natasha Lyles and D. Diane Weaver, look on.

was asked to be supportive in public statements of the INS staff and mission.

Three television news networks - CNN, Fox and NBC - sent camera crews to film the Ashcroft visit. In response to a question from a broadcast journalist, the Attorney General described his meeting with INS officials as "a wide-ranging discussion." He also expressed favorable comments about the visit the following day during a monthly staff meeting at the Department of Justice.

Out in the hallways of the Chester A. Arthur Building, Ashcroft worked his way through crowds of the curious and well-wishers. He appeared to be the seasoned campaigner who in a prior political career had won election successively as State Attorney General, Governor and U.S. Senator for his native state of Missouri.

Some employees got the opportunity to exchange a few words with their new boss. For most, a

handshake and a smile sufficed, as the Attorney General circumnavigated the full length of the hallways that encircle each of the building's seven floors in a span of 50 minutes. A few employees, who had planned ahead and brought a camera, were rewarded as Ashcroft posed for photos.

Ashcroft was presented a green Border Patrol cap as a memento of the visit from Deputy Chief Michael Nicley. He also received a whistle imprinted with an emergency number from the Office of Security Operations and a burst of applause from the investigations branch of the Office of Internal Audit Department.

The Attorney General startled Management Analyst Steve Tarragon, who had been working at his desk. Taking note of Tarragon's blood donor sticker, he said, "I see that you gave blood today."

"I give blood everyday," responded Tarragon, which drew an appreciative laugh from Ashcroft.



Border Patrol Agent Robert Harris focuses the camera on Diane Reinke of the Border Patrol staff. Agent Renee Harris is at left.



Laura Ragan of the Office of Policy and Planning shakes hands with Attorney General Ashcroft.

## **Border Patrol follows the fans to a special hockey night in El Paso**

The arrival of professional ice hockey in El Paso has brought a new enthusiasm for winter sports to the arid plains of West Texas and the Border Patrol wanted to get in on the action.

The first-ever "Border Patrol Night at the Nest" on March 16 was, by almost any measure, a success. About 150 Border Patrol staff and family members joined a crowd of 5,000 spectators to watch the El Paso Buzzards take on the Odessa Jackaloupes.

The ice-chilled El Paso County Coliseum, which has been known as "The Nest" since the Buzzards made it their roost, contrasted with warmer outdoor temperatures. El Paso Sector Border Patrol Chief Luis Barker dropped the puck to start the game.

Each child from Border Patrol families received a real hockey stick and a chosen few had the chance to ride shot-gun on the Zamboni, the ice-grooming machine that smooths the playing surface between periods. The Border Patrol Honor Guard marched rink-side during one break in the game and the National Anthem was performed by the Honor Guard buglers.

Agents also set up a display near the arena's entrance to explain to hockey fans the Border Patrol's P.R.I.D.E. program. Operation P.R.I.D.E., offered by uniformed Border Patrol Agents, assists educators, service organizations, and other community groups combat illicit drugs and other hazards confronting youth.

The game was marked by high-flying action. The daughter of Las Cruces Agent Mark Stone sustained a shoulder bruise, but no serious injury, when a puck flew into the crowd during the second period. She later sported the puck as an unexpected souvenir that had to be the envy of every child at the rink.

The Buzzards of the Western Professional Hockey League have proven to be a surprising hit with El Pasoans, most of whom have never set foot in ice skates. The team's popularity is helped by a prowess on the ice; the Buzzards have captured two league championships in just five years.

The Buzzards stayed true to their winning ways on Border Patrol Night, beating the Jackaloupes by a score of 5 to 2.

## **INS Bangkok Team and Thai police move against alien smuggling ring**

A one-year investigation by the INS Bangkok Enforcement Team in cooperation with Thai police dealt a serious setback to one of Southeast Asia's largest smuggling rings.

Operation "Toothless Dragon" grew out of information gathered by INS Bangkok from three confidential informants. Evidence gathered in the case indicated that the ring had been operating for five years and smuggled hundreds, perhaps thousands, of illegal migrants to the United States and Japan, in most cases for the purpose of prostitution.

The INS Bangkok Enforcement Team covers all of Southeast Asia.

Toothless Dragon was one of seven cases involving migrant smuggling, trafficking and document vending completed by the team in the last year. In addition to arresting the alleged kingpin of the ring, a Thai national, the Crime Suppression Division of the Royal Thai police and INS investigators seized about 70 passports and uncovered a large counterfeiting ring dealing in U.S. travelers checks. The investigation

also identified about 20 persons who escorted smuggled individuals into the United States and also revealed a wealth of smuggling and trafficking intelligence, which has been shared with other law enforcement agencies.

A criminal background check showed that the alleged head of the operation had a long arrest record in Thailand with convictions for illegal gambling, assault, and unlawful possession of a firearm.

The organization allegedly received \$10,000 for every prostitute successfully smuggled into the United States. The ring operated out of a Bangkok travel agency where it had access to hundreds of valid passports. By choosing passports containing photographs similar in appearance to persons it intended to smuggle, the alleged smugglers avoided the need to tamper with the passports. The organization targeted Chicago, Los Angeles and New York City ports of entry and placed the imposters in groups of tourists.

# CHICAGO TAPS ITS STAFF'S BILINGUAL SKILLS

Chicago's Hispanic TV viewers are accustomed to hearing District Director Brian Perryman's voice in Spanish.



By Marilu Cabrera

Waiting on a Chicago street corner in March for a camera crew to set up a shot, Chicago District Director Brian Perryman was quizzed by a passerby about an immigration issue.

Both the question and Perryman's answer were in fluent Spanish, as would be the 30-second televised public service announcement (PSA) that was being filmed on an overcast afternoon in the "Little Village," an Hispanic neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side.

Perryman filmed two PSAs developed by the Chicago District to explain provisions of the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act. The spots were aired about eight times a day on the local affiliates of the Telemundo and Univision Spanish-language television networks. These and previous appearances on interview shows have made the District Director a familiar face and voice on Chicago's Spanish-language television and radio.

"This is such a complicated law that I feel obligated to dispel any myths and confusion that may exist," Perryman said. An important message conveyed in the PSAs is a warning about falling victim to immigration fraud practitioners.

Putting out the word on INS matters means communicating in several languages in Chicago, a city renowned for receiving immigrants and for tight-knit ethnic neighborhoods. With help from several employees who are fluent in languages besides English, the Chicago District is doing just that.

Starting in early March, the Chicago District developed video tapes explaining the LIFE Act in

Spanish, Polish, Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, in addition to Tagalog, a native language of the Philippines.

Language barriers are overcome in other ways too. Michael Chan, a Supervisory Adjudications Officer in Chicago, is a guest each month on a local radio station that broadcasts in Cantonese as well as in Mandarin.

Perryman and his staff are frequent guests on the city's Polish-language radio programs. These interviews are conducted in English and translated by the program hosts into Polish.

A weekly article on immigration topics prepared by the district's staff is translated and published in 15 of the city's ethnic newspapers. The district also organizes informational forums in ethnic neighborhoods in conjunction with community-based organizations and distributes flyers in Spanish and English.

The campaign to explain the LIFE Act seems to have paid off. By one closely watched measure, the length of the lines that form each weekday morning outside the INS offices on West Jackson Street, in Chicago's Loop, are no longer than usual, despite a surge in LIFE-related applications.

District Director Perryman, whose father spent his entire career with the INS, acquired his second language during his early years as a Border Patrol Agent in-training. His *español* was honed to fluency by practice while serving with the Border Patrol in Texas and later in the Chicago office with a little help from his staff and in continuing education classes.

## Dual conferences look for ways to reduce on-the-job injury

Reducing the number and severity of injuries and illnesses sustained by INS employees was a common theme for two conferences held in Alexandria, Va., in March.

The Office of Environmental Occupational Safety and Health (EOSH), formed five years ago, encourages field safety and health specialists to work closely with Workers' Compensation managers, said EOSH Director Glenn C. Pritchard.

Safety and health specialists typically focus on preventative measures that are likely to reduce the probability of injury or illness. Workers' Compensation managers deal with the outcome of injuries and illness and are interested in restoring injured employees to good health and back to their jobs as soon as possible.

One three-day meeting brought together about 55 Worker's Compensation managers from around the country while the second meeting brought together about 40 Field Safety, health environmental specialists.

Newly hired Border Patrol Agents, given the physically demanding nature of their work and the relatively high incidence of injuries that new Agents sustain, are a concern of the safety specialists.

"You're looking at a substantial amount of lost resources," David Yentzer, Assistant Commissioner for Administration, told the safety specialists. The first priority is to search for ways to reduce the number of injuries and a second priority is to get employees back on the job, possibly to alternative light-duty assignments. Arranging such "reasonable accommodations" for returning employees was on the agenda of both conferences.

"If we can get them back within six months or so, we feel like we've been able to sustain a career," Pritchard said. Studies indicate that employees who remain on disability leave for more than two years are unlikely to return to work for the same employer, and even those who are out for shorter periods can face psychological issues that make a return difficult.

The safety conference debuted a 12-minute video, entitled "Occupational Safety and Health: Making a Difference," that is intended to give INS managers a general understanding of safety issues.



**Bestowing mementos and praise of Mary Ann Wyrsh's tenure at INS are** (from top): Acting Commissioner Kevin Rooney presenting a plaque to Wyrsh; Acting Deputy Attorney General Robert S. Mueller III; Western Regional Director Johnny Williams; Chief of Staff Michael Becraft, presenting a framed collection of INS badges; and Executive Associate Commissioner of Field Operations Mike Pearson.



# PEOPLE ON *the Move*

## **Wyrsch receives praise and mementos as she shifts her sights to U.N. post**

The INS gave a festive send-off March 30 to Acting Commissioner Mary Ann Wyrsch who was headed to a top job with the United Nations agency in charge of refugee relief.

Wyrsch departed the INS with thanks from each of the agency's divisions and a trunkful of mementos of her service as both Deputy Commissioner and Acting Commissioner. An overflow crowd of more than 150 well-wishers attended the event in the main conference room of INS headquarters.

Wyrsch told the gathering that she had found it difficult to leave the INS, the agency that provided the final chapter in her distinguished 35-year career in the federal government. The INS comprises "the most dedicated civil servants that I have ever met," she said.

She expressed pride that the agency she was leaving was strong and robust and prepared to face new challenges. Wyrsch mentioned specifically that the INS was making better use of information technology and that detention standards for persons held in INS custody would soon be fully implemented.

As for the memories of INS she takes with her, she said. "In truth, I never had so much fun." Wyrsch served three years at INS, during a period of rapid growth in the agency's budget and workforce.

Among the 20 speakers bidding her farewell was Wyrsch's successor as Acting Commissioner, Kevin D. Rooney. He is the former head of the Executive Office of Immigration Review.

Thanking Wyrsch for her service, Rooney also said that he was pleased that someone with first-hand INS experience was taking on an important role with the leading international agency dealing with refugees.

Wyrsch started April 2 as Deputy High Commissioner for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, a position based in Geneva, Switzerland.

She should have little difficulty keeping track of the time zones that separate her former and current jobs in the United States and Europe. Three

different INS departments independently presented Wyrsch with decorative clocks as tokens of their appreciation for her INS service.

Among more than a dozen other gifts and mementos was a framed collection of badges carried by INS officers, presented by Chief of Staff Michael Becraft.

A model of the Statue of Liberty, the traditional gift bestowed on INS honorees, was presented by Acting Commissioner Rooney. The INS Budget Office offered a complementary gift, a lead crystal representation of Lady Liberty's torch that was suggestive of both light and leadership.

Mike Pearson, Executive Associate Commissioner of Field Operations, spoke of Wyrsch's fact-driven approach to problem-solving. Whatever the issue, as both Deputy Commissioner and again as Acting Commissioner, she insisted that all the pertinent facts and available statistics be put on the table as the basis for decisions.

Acting Deputy Attorney General Robert S. Mueller III said that Wyrsch had demonstrated professional competence and a pleasant bearing in his contacts. Mueller, the U.S. Attorney for Northern California, said that he had come to greatly respect the contribution of the INS and its employees, and was looking forward to working closely with them in his new position.

Also on hand was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor Raymond Uhalde, representing the department where Wyrsch spent the longest stretch of her federal career. During 27 years at Labor, Wyrsch served at various times as its Director of Budget and Director of Unemployment Insurance Service. He joined other former colleagues of Wyrsch from her tenure at the Labor Department in saying farewell to Wyrsch.

Uhalde recalled that when Wyrsch departed Labor, some observed that Labor's loss was INS's gain. A new version of that saying could be applied now, as Wyrsch leaves a distinguished federal career: the INS' loss is the United Nations' gain.

# INS NEWS FROM *the Field*

"Both governments view this process as an exercise of shared responsibility, with a long term perspective, to ensure that migration of Mexicans to the United States is of mutual opportunity and benefit."

JOINT STATEMENT,

HIGH LEVEL

WORKING GROUP

## High Level Working Group gets down to business

Less than seven weeks after Presidents George W. Bush and Vicente Fox of Mexico announced plans to form a cabinet-level working group to consider new approaches to immigration and border issues, top U.S. and Mexican officials held their first meeting in Washington, D.C., on April 4.

Mexican officials said that their newly elected government was prepared to crack down on the growing number of foreigners who use Mexico as a transit point for illegal entry into the United States. U.S. officials agreed to discuss Mexican proposals for a "guest worker" program and to "regularize" the status of undocumented Mexicans who live illegally in the United States.

The goal of the U.S.-Mexico High Level Working Group is to achieve a framework for orderly, legal, safe and humane migration and for protection of worker rights, according to a joint statement. Attending the meeting were Attorney General John Ashcroft and his counterpart, Mexican Interior Secretary Santiago Creel, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda.

The first round of talks established the mechanics and timetable for future sessions. Several meetings are planned at sites along the border with the aim of strengthening existing mechanisms and developing new ideas for cooperation on border safety.

Both governments have agreed to significantly increase their commitments of resources to border issues, according to the joint statement. Priority will be given to programs that

combat the smuggling of people and prevent the deaths of migrants at the border.

The Working Group's broader agenda includes discussions of the H-2 visa program, ideas on regularization of undocumented Mexicans in the United States, alternative approaches that could admit temporary workers from Mexico, cooperation on law enforcement issues and regional economic development in the border regions.

The two sides agreed that all Mexicans currently in the United States who are eligible for the benefits provided under the Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act, should be strongly urged to take advantage of those benefits.

The Working Group will deliver a preliminary report to the Binational Commission meeting to be held this summer. It will also endeavor to produce its initial results in a report to the two presidents late this year.

The Working Group's statement outlined its overall mission as:

"Both governments view this process as an exercise of shared responsibility, with a long term perspective, to ensure that migration of Mexicans to the United States is of mutual opportunity and

benefit. Both governments are also committed to the regulation and safety of persons at our common border. It is recognized that the components of the agenda form a single undertaking, seeking an in-depth solution on migration."

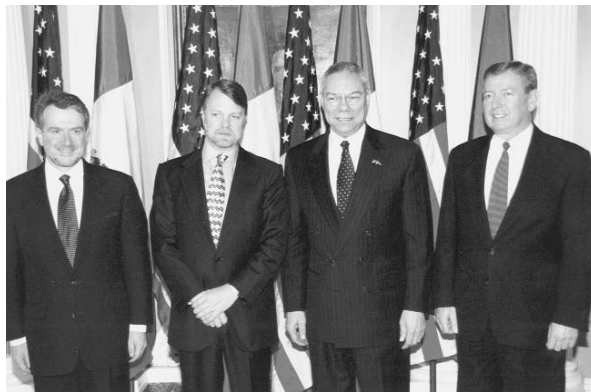
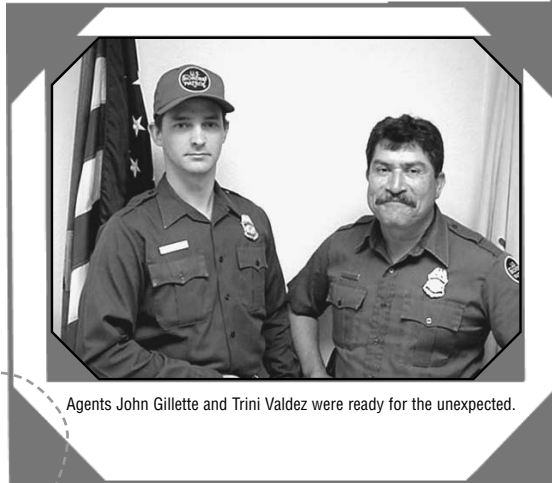


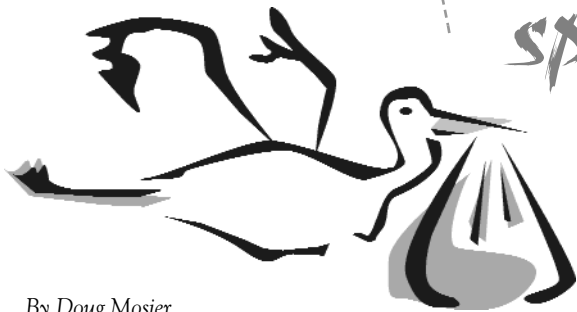
Photo: The Department of State

Gathered for press photographers, following their meeting at the Department of State, are: Mexican Minister of the Interior Santiago Creel, Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Attorney General John Ashcroft

## Agents assist on a special delivery at a New Mexico traffic checkpoint



Agents John Gillette and Trini Valdez were ready for the unexpected.



## special delivery

By Doug Mosier

The Border Patrol's traffic checkpoint on Interstate 10, west of Las Cruces, N.M., is about 25 miles from the nearest hospital. But, it might as well have been on the other side of the world as far as Border Patrol Agents John Gillette and Trini Valdez were concerned as they played pivotal roles in an unexpected event just before dawn on March 15.

Around 5 a.m., a Ford pickup truck with two occupants pulled into the checkpoint. The blaring horn was the first sign of distress. The second was the quickened tempo of words tumbling from the mouth of an excited husband, Javier Otero. His wife, Veronica, sitting next to him, was about to give birth.

Otero had called the local emergency dispatch number on his cellular

phone and had

been attempting to give directions to emergency medical personnel when he pulled into the checkpoint.

By the time that Otero's vehicle was parked in secondary inspection, the medical situation was progressing quickly, very quickly. Veronica's contractions had accelerated and the baby's head was "crowning."

Fortunately, Agent Valdez had been a corpsman in the U.S. Navy and knew something about these matters. Still, as he later explained, his coursework did not include witnessing an actual birth. With little time to think of anything but his Navy training, Valdez began assisting Veronica with her birth.

Moments later, a baby boy appeared. Agent Valdez cleaned the baby's face, mouth and nose. Then, using sterile gauze from a first-aid kit, he tied off the umbilical cord.

Veronica and her baby were already wrapped in blankets when an emergency medical team from the Fair Acres Fire Department arrived a few minutes later. The new mother and son were transported to Memorial General Hospital in Las Cruces.

Agents say the new parents were very appreciative. True to the Hollywood ending for these sort of out-of-hospital birth experiences, Javier and Veronica asked if Agent Valdez would mind contributing his first name, Trini, to their baby.

Could we be seeing the emergence of new piece of American birth folklore: the image of the expectant father, nervously pacing the concrete in secondary inspection?

# INS NEWS FROM *the Field*

## **Sham-marriage broker tripped up when court clerks noticed familiar faces**

A 54-year-old woman from North Chicago, Ill., was convicted of arranging at least 40 phony marriages, beginning in 1986, that were intended solely as a means for illegal aliens to obtain legal U.S. residency.

Her biggest mistake appears to have been sending too much repeat business to a few northern Illinois courthouses. Officials in one county clerk's office noticed that several women appeared more than once for marriage licenses during a short period. That office notified the INS, which opened an investigation in April of 1998.

According to the government's case, the woman herself married five of her illegal clients, charging them between \$1,500, and \$2,500 for the marriage and help in obtaining a Green Card. Until her indictment in November 2000, she also recruited six other U.S. citizens to marry a total of 13 illegal aliens from Honduras and Mexico, paying them between \$500 and \$1,000 each for their participation.

As a result, the woman was sentenced on March 4 to four years behind bars. As the alleged mastermind

of the plan, the woman was also sentenced to three years supervision and fined \$2,000.

Another 15 persons were also charged and convicted in connection with the scheme and were sentenced to probation or home confinement and, in some cases, a fine ranging from \$500 to \$1,000.

The conspirators would use fake names when applying for a marriage license to avoid being recognized as repeat customers. Then, they coached the couples on how to remain calm and answer questions asked by INS officers during the interview to obtain residency.

"This case involved a great deal of time, effort, and dedication by all who helped bring it to light. It feels good to see justice served," said Special Agent Pete Fahey of the Chicago District, who worked on "Operation Family Business."

The story became front-page news in *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Chicago Sun-Times* and the trial received extensive coverage over several months in print and broadcast media.

## **Miami District's two-day operation targets aliens convicted of sex offenses**

Special Agents from the Miami INS Investigations Unit started removal proceedings against 25 criminal aliens most of whom had been convicted as sex offenders or sex predators.

The two-day operation started March 28 and was run in coordination with the Florida State Attorney's Office and its Sexual Battery/Child Abuse unit, the Dade County Jail and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

The 25 individuals picked up in the operation had convictions for such crimes as second degree murder, aggravated assault with a

deadly weapon and armed sexual battery on a person over 12 years of age.

"Sexual offenders pose a danger to the community and criminal aliens who have forfeited their legal rights to lawfully live and work in the United States will be removed," said James Goldman, Assistant District Director for Investigations.

The Miami District a year ago created a list identifying more than 530 foreign-born sexual predators in Florida who are now in criminal or immigration detention.

## **20 aliens picked up for overstaying visas**

INS Special Agents arrested 19 men and one woman on March 27 who were illegally employed at a South Florida carpet cleaning firm and a moving van company.

The subjects entered the United States using B-2 visas, or tourist visas. Seventeen immigrants are nationals of Israel and the remaining three are from Colombia, Peru and Brazil. All 20 of the illegal workers will be detained at INS detention facilities pending completion of removal proceedings.

## **AFTER A DIFFICULT START, THE ASYLUM CORPS FINISHES ITS FIRST DECADE ON A HIGH NOTE**

The INS Asylum Officer Corps marked its 10th anniversary in early April as a smooth-running program that provides a fair and efficient review of asylum claims. The Asylum Corps' primary mission remains, as it has been since it opened its doors in April 1991, reviewing the applications of thousands of foreign-born persons who travel to the United States each year and petition for asylum.

The job of Asylum Officers is to review the applicants' claims and determine if they indeed have a well-founded fear of persecution in their home countries based on their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or adherence to certain political opinions.

However, the Asylum Corps has been assigned several other roles in recent years, sometimes in response to a surge in asylum applications in the early 1990s and at other times due to court rulings and changes in immigration law. In 1997, the Asylum Corps was given the duty of determining if persons subject to expedited removal from the United States who said that they feared returning to their home met the "credible fear" standard.

To implement the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), the Asylum Corps took charge of adjudicating claims for suspension of deportation and cancellation of removal of certain applicants who fall under that statute. More than 90,000 applications under NACARA have been filed and in excess of 100,000 more are expected.

### **THE EARLY YEARS**

The Asylum Corps's early years brought the biggest challenges, as an unexpected surge in asylum applications swamped the agency in the early 1990s. The crisis brought answers and ultimate success.

Long gone is the accumulating backlog of asylum cases, which had grown to 425,000 by the end of 1994 and spurred reform of the asylum program six years ago. Delays that kept individual cases alive - and applicants living in limbo in the United States for several years - are, for the most part, history.

New applications are being processed promptly. About 80 percent of newly filed cases adjudicated in local asylum offices are decided by Asylum Officers within 60 days, according to Joseph Langlois, Asylum Director in the Office of International Affairs. Nearly all new applications for asylum that are not approved by an Asylum Officer are resolved in the courts within 180 days of filing.

In the majority of cases, officers either approve an application or place the applicant in removal proceedings and refer the application to an immigration judge to decide in the course of those proceedings. To be eligible for asylum, an applicant must establish persecution or a well-founded fear of future prosecution arising from his or her beliefs or membership in a group.

Director Langlois was one of 82 original Asylum Officers when the Corps opened seven offices on April 2, 1991. He was

promoted through the ranks, first to a Supervisory Asylum Officer, then Director of the Newark, N.J., office, and Deputy Director of the Asylum Division of the Office of International Affairs. He recently became Director of the Asylum Division.

The number of asylum applications climbed steadily during the early years, peaking at 127,000 received during the 1993 fiscal year. (This number excludes cases filed under the American Baptist Churches v. Thornburgh settlement agreement.) By 1993, the asylum system was in crisis, "having become a magnet for abuse by persons filing applications in order to obtain employment authorization," according to the INS.

The asylum reform initiative of 1995 brought relief. Recalling the Asylum Corps' beginnings, Langlois said, "we placed a heavy emphasis on the quality of the interview (with the applicant) and the quality of the decision. We were less focused on logistics and efficiencies." With asylum reform, "we have maintained the quality we set out with, but we've added tremendously to the efficiencies."

### **LANGLOIS CREDITS THREE SPECIFIC CHANGES:**

- Increased staff. As of April, the Asylum Corps had 317 interviewing officers, more than double the number in 1994. The number of immigration judges was also sharply increased.
- De-coupling authorization to work in the United States from the asylum application process. Instead of making work authorization automatic with the filing of an asylum application, applicants must now wait 150 days to apply for authorization, unless the asylum application is granted before that date. Work permits are granted only if applicants are approved for asylum or if the government takes longer than 180 days to reach a final decision.
- Streamlining the asylum application process. Cases that are not approved by the Asylum Corps are directly referred to the Immigration Court with scheduled hearing dates if the applicants are out of status. To ensure service of charging documents applicants must return to the INS office two weeks after the interview to pick up their decisions. Additionally, many of the pre-reform procedures that were unnecessarily time-consuming have been eliminated or streamlined.

The asylum program now receives fewer applications, but approves a higher proportion than it did five years ago. During the 2000 fiscal year, which ended last Sept. 30, the Asylum Corps received about 40,000 cases, compared to 127,000 in fiscal 1993.

The approval rate during the first six months of fiscal 2001, through March 31, was about 46 percent, up slightly from a 44 percent rate in fiscal 2000. Those rates compare with a 22 percent approval rate in fiscal 1994. For Langlois, the statistics suggest that asylum reform succeeded in minimizing the incentives to file frivolous asylum claims and allowed the Asylum Corps to promptly grant asylum to genuine refugees.

# INS NEWS *of Note*

## **Border Patrol Honor Guard performs double-duty at Justice Department ceremonies in Washington**

The Border Patrol Honor Guard, accompanied by the San Diego Sector's two-man contingent of bagpipers, performed at the installation of John Ashcroft as Attorney General in Washington, D.C., on March 18.

For most of the participants, the installation was a return appearance to the Great Hall at the Department of Justice building. The Honor Guard also marked the departure of former Attorney General Janet Reno in ceremonies on Jan. 11.

The Honor Guard, led by Supervisory Agent Dan Harris of the El Paso Sector, was charged with the presentation and retirement of the colors at both events. Playing bagpipes for the presentation were Special Operations Supervisor Michael Gregg of the Brown Field Border Patrol Station and Field Operations Supervisor Michael Pomeroy of the Chula Vista Border Patrol Station.

Following the Ashcroft installation, the Honor Guard members were invited to a private reception for the new Attorney General.

The Honor Guard performed twice on Jan. 11, honoring Reno's nearly eight years in the post. A morning session was attended by an overflow crowd of Justice Department employees and dignitaries. In the afternoon, the department hosted an unveiling of the former Attorney General's official portrait.

The ranks of the Honor Guard included: Senior Patrol Agent Raul Perez of the Del Rio Sector; Senior Patrol Agent Lee Stovall of the El Paso Sector; Agent Ricardo Barreda of the Laredo Sector; Agent Aquilles Villareal of the McAllen Sector; and Agent Nestor Ortiz of the Tucson Sector. Agent Timothy Davis of the San Diego Sector participated in the January ceremony, but was unable to attend the March ceremony. His position was filled by Agent Dora Gonzales of the San Diego Sector.

## *The Wearing of the Green* (Southwestern Style)

*By Bud Strom*

The year was back in nineteen - four.  
When Teddy was our Chief.  
The mission came to guard our land,  
With a force, beyond belief.

Now seventy-five was all they had,  
To guard us shore to shore.  
And this the force from north to south,  
'cause there would be no more.

Mounted inspectors was the name,  
That they were given then.  
Horse and man to work as one,  
A hearty lot of men.

And they evolved down through the years,  
From Pancho Villa's time,  
To stem the flow of boot leg booze,  
And smugglers 'cross the line.

The early days saw little law,  
In southern border towns.  
A force of half a million troops,  
Were sent to hold the ground.

No longer does that army force,  
Need to serve our border's reach.  
Replaced from shore to shore with those  
Whose charge was "stem the breach".

These men and women bind our shores,  
Those boundries, south and north.  
They serve with measured skill and thought,  
As human tides come forth.

Eight thousand now, they swelled the ranks,  
They're trained to meet the test.  
And put their lives on line each day,  
Our nation's border best.

Lest we lose our thoughts in dreams,  
"swashbuckling" days are gone.  
They work the mission that's at hand,  
Each day, from dawn to dawn.

We now salute and give our thanks  
And do so with great pride.  
To men and women wearing green,  
And families by their side.

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# MOUNTAIN TOWN LIGHTS UP THE BARBEQUE TO THANK AGENTS FOR A JOB WELL-DONE

By Greg S. Maier

Agents from the Naco Border Patrol Station sat down to a western-style cookout as the honored guests of a thankful Arizona mountain community, where a cooperative approach to enforcement had sharply reduced the nightly movements of illegal immigrants.

The lunch last Oct. 14 for the Agents and their families was one way that the residents of Stump Canyon, a neighborhood of about 40 houses set along the twisting roads in the picturesque Huachuca Mountains, expressed their gratitude to the Border Patrol.

Another note of thanks was delivered in a poem, penned for the occasion by local resident and published cowboy poet Bud Strom. Entitled "The Wearing of the Green (Southwestern Style)," the piece is a concise re-telling of Border Patrol history. The poem is now mounted on a plaque that hangs in the Naco Station's muster room - and is reprinted on the facing page.

Even veteran Agents were hard-pressed to recall such a heartfelt expression of a community's gratitude for their efforts. Neighbors had even fashioned a thank-you sign from discarded water bottles that had been left in their yards back when Stump Canyon was a nighttime thoroughfare.

"One of the highest forms of recognition that can be bestowed upon us is recognition by the communities that we serve," wrote Tucson Sector Border Patrol Chief David Aguilar in a column published in the sector's newsletter, *The Desert Watch*. "It is especially rewarding when that recognition is unsolicited and comes as a direct result of our hard work and dedication."

However, Agents and residents could recall an earlier time when relations were tense and tenuous.

During the summer of 1999, stepped up enforcement along the border near the Naco Port of Entry caused a sharp rise in attempted illegal border crossings in outlying areas, such as over the Huachuca mountains. Stump Canyon, which is about 20 miles west of Naco, became a well-trodden route connecting mountain paths with State Highway 92.

Stump Canyon residents frequently called the Naco station to complain and to plead for increased patrols. They also began to attend Citizen Advisory Board meetings and put into practice several of the Border Patrol's recommendations, such as increasing outdoor lighting on their properties. They worked together to improve their reporting of trespassers. Most important, their patience paid off as some of the expanded Border Patrol units at Naco were deployed to the canyon area.

Within a few months, the effects were being felt. Residents were still calling in reports, but the Border Patrol was now staffed to respond quickly. The flow of illegal immigrants subsided and Stump Canyon residents were finally ready to celebrate - with the Agents who had helped restore tranquility to the canyon.

And over on the Single Star Ranch, near the base of the canyon, Bud Strom - poet, rancher and retired Army Brigadier General - put pen to paper and wrote:

*"We now salute and give our thanks  
And do so with great pride.  
To men and women wearing green,  
And families by their side."*



Agent Victor Manjarrez and Poet Bud Strom.

## About the poet ...

Roy "Bud" Strom is the author of a book of poetry entitled *Dry Lighting*, which was

published in 1993 but is now out of print. Some of his other works are available on a compact disk, and tape recording, called *Lightning and Angels*. He is working on a second book of poems, which will carry that same title.

Since 1990, Strom has been a frequent participant at Cowboy Poet gatherings, which are held occasionally throughout the western United States and feature poetry written about the West and its lifestyle.

In 1985, Strom retired from the U.S. Army with the rank of Brigadier General. He and his wife moved soon after that to their retirement home, The Single Star Ranch, near the edge of Stump Canyon, Ariz. At age 67, Gen. Strom often can be found riding his horse on the ranch. He composes verse in his spare time. He counts among his local friends several veteran Border Patrol Agents.

# INS NEWS FROM *the Field*

## Border Patrol Agents train with the Mounties

Why would two San Diego-based Border Patrol Agents choose to leave usually sunny Southern California for wintry Ottawa, Canada, in February?

For Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Chris Mangusing and Senior Patrol Agent Greg Davis the attraction was a once-in-a-lifetime invitation to ride and train with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Musical Ride Section, a world-famous performing equestrian group with a tradition dating back to 1887.

Agents Mangusing and Davis saddled up with 14 other visiting officers from various police organizations for two weeks of training, consisting of two or three sessions a day, in an indoor arena at the Canadian Police College in the Canadian capital.

The San Diego sector uses 25 horses and riders to patrol its most rugged terrain. The Agents and their mounts also make public appearances to promote the INS in the San Diego area. Back home in San Diego, the Agents plan to put to use some of the ideas they acquired while training with the Musical Ride Section.

The Mounties, the popular name for RCMP officers, have evolved into a widely recognized symbol of Canada. However, the RCMP's horses are no longer regularly used in law enforcement, but only for ceremonial purposes, such as parades and, of course, the Musical Ride.

The RCMP is unusual among the world's police organizations in that it serves multiple functions as a combined national, federal,

provincial, and municipal police force. Among other assignments, the RCMP is responsible for law enforcement along Canada's borders, a role that makes it Canada's closest counterpart to the U.S. Border Patrol.



Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Chris Mangusing (center) and Senior Patrol Agent Greg Davis (right) with a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

## New Congressional aides tour New York District Office

Elections bring new Senators and Representatives to Congress and new members bring new Congressional aides, many of whom will be making at least occasional contact with INS offices on behalf of constituents.

The New York District office welcomed three new Congressional aides on March 21. The Congressional liaison staff organized an introductory tour of the office, where they met staff members who deal with adjudications, citizenship, adjustment of status, employment authorization, refugees and parole. The three aides also met with New York District Director Edward McElroy.

Attending were Jennifer Kritz, an aide to Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York and Michael Losquadro and Michael D'Abramo, who both serve on the staff of Rep. Felix J. Grucci, Jr., of New York. Sen. Clinton and Rep. Grucci took their seats in January, following their elections last November.



New York District Director Edward McElroy, second from right, gives a tour to Congressional aides Michael Losquadro, Michael D'Abramo and Jennifer Kritz.